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تأملات ابن القيم في الأنفس والأفاق

MEN AND THE UNIVERSE

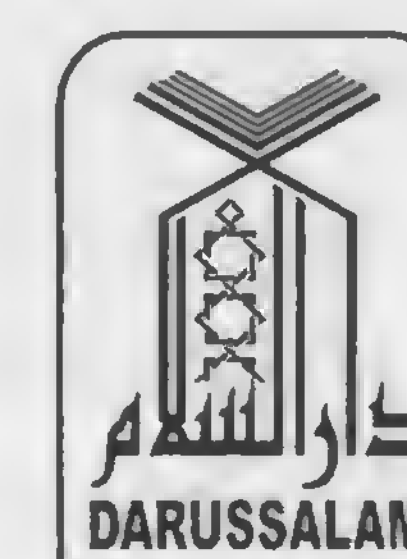
Reflections of Ibn Al-Qayyem

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CONTENTS

* Preface.....	a
* Al-Imam Ibn Al-Qayyem.....	e

CHAPTER ONE: MAN

* Ibn Al-Qayyem's propositions concerning man.....	2
* Stages of the creation of man.....	4
The drop of sperm in the womb, the shaping of the clot, and the lump of flesh	8
* The stage of bones, flesh and nerves.....	10
* The forms of various bones and how they are joined	11
* The head and its senses	14
* The eyes.....	14
* The eyebrows	15
* The ears	15
* The nose	16
* The mouth.....	20
* The teeth	21
* The hair	24
* The hands, fingers and finger nails.....	24
* The structure of bones	26
* The ligament	28
* The brain and its relation to the heart	33
* The digestive system	40
* Who took so much care of you?	46
* The male and the female	52
* The tools of reproduction in humans.....	60
* Human organs from an aesthetic aspect.....	61
* A refutation of naturalists	62
* The meaning of nature	64
* In the best stature.....	65
* Allah's honouring of man	68
* The blessing of senses.....	74
* Aids to the senses	74

* The heart and its relations to the other organs	79
* Contemplating the case of the human without senses	80
* The blessings of verbal expression and the will.....	83
* The plurality of organs.....	84
* Similarity of animals and dissimilarity of humans	86
* Voice and speech tools.....	88
* Other benefits	92
* The systems of the head	93
* Inquiries concerning the human being.....	100
* Children's pain.....	107
* The causes of ordeals	112
* The driving forces of the body's organs	114
* The outlook of the believer versus that of others.....	116
* Remembering and forgetting	117
* Al-Haya'	118
* Good expression.....	120
* On writing.....	122
* Knowledge and ignorance.....	125

CHAPTER TWO: THE UNIVERSE

* Moving planets	137
* The virtue of contemplating the heavens and the earth.....	143
* Two kinds of looking	148
* The wonder of variation in stars' movement.....	149
* The stars	151
* The light of stars	153
* The four seasons	162
* Control of sunrise	164
* The light of the sun and the light of the moon	164
* The rising and setting of the sun and the moon.....	165
* The day and the night.....	169
* The duration of the day and the night.....	172
* The sky	174
* The way to thinking and reflection – focusing the mind for that purpose	179
* Remembrance and thought.....	187

CHAPTER THREE: ANIMALS

* The creation of animals	193
* The subduing of animals	194
* Providing tools of manipulation.....	196
* Providing canine teeth and claws.....	197
* The wisdom of commandment and the wisdom of creation.....	199
* The legs of animals	200
* The backs of animals	202
* Men's coat and animals' coat.....	203
* The faces of animals	205
* The multiplicity of animals.....	206
* The mercy of animals.....	209
* The elephant	212
* The diversity of creatures points to the wisdom of the Maker	214
* The animal and tricks	216
* How birds fly.....	218
* The egg	219
* The giraffe	221
* Birds' craws.....	224
* Birds' feathers and the diversity of their colours.....	224
* Some birds' long legs.....	225
* Seeking a living.....	226
* The multiplicity of insects	226
* The bat	228
* The Maker's guidance.....	229
* The ants.....	229
* Bees	232
* The production and benefits of honey	234
* Conditions for healing with honey	236
* Milk.....	239
* The fish	241
* The locusts	242
* The right of the oppressed	243
* Allah's ways with creation	245
* The wisdom of transforming some humans to animals.....	247
* Wisdom of sending of messengers.....	250

CHAPTER FOUR: NATURE

* Creation of the world	253
* The seas	256
* The earth	259
* The atmosphere	264
* The stability of the earth	274
* The diversity of climates	276
* Mountains	276
* The interior of the earth	283
* Earthquakes	286
* Air and the benefits of winds	286
* Heat and cold	291
* The creation of fire	292
* The rareness of gold and silver	294
* Availability of favours through Divine mercy	296
* The distribution of rain	301
* Greenery (Vegetation)	302
* The distribution of provisions and fruits	306
* Benefits of crops and trees	307
* The nourishment of plants	307
* Roots of trees	310
* Tree leaves	311
* The benefits of leaves	312
* The creation of stones of dates	314
* The skin of fruits	314
* The creation of the pomegranate	315
* The creation of seeds	316
* The creation of grains	317
* The right amount of trees' yield	317
* The water melon	321
* The diversity of fruit to fit the diversity of times	321
* The palm-tree	323
* Which are more beneficial, dates of grapes	329
* Timber	332
* Desert plants	332
* Medicines	333

Ibn Al-Qayyem's propositions concerning man¹

1. That he was first created from clay, and that his seed was made from a draught of despised fluid.

2. That he was created from a handful that Allah collected from all parts of the earth, so that it contains the good and the evil, the easy-going and the intolerant, the liberal and the miserly. It was Jibreel (Gabriel) who took this handful, then it was fermented until it turned to mud, then Allah fashioned man as He deemed fit. Then He breathed into him of His spirit, so that he was a human of flesh and blood, talking and reasoning...Later on Allah had His angels prostrate themselves before man, and taught him the names of everything.

3. That he was blessed with intellect, knowledge, understanding, eloquence and speech.

4. That he was privileged with the quality of modesty.

5. That he was privileged with two means of expression, the oral and the written.

6. That he was endowed by Allah with the power of acquiring knowledge by several means.

7. That he was distinguished with certain motives and impulses that serve to accomplish what is good for man.

¹ Hasan Al-Hajjaji, "Ibn-al Qayyem's Educational Thought"

8. That man was distinguished with strength, desire and will.

9. That Allah's commandments are to be permanently observed until the day man meets His Lord.

10. That man was not created without purpose.

11. That man is distinguished from the other creatures in appearance and shape.

12. That man is an indivisible whole: composite of soul, mind and body.

Stages of the Creation of Man

Ibn Al-Qayyem writes the following:

By considering the verses in the Qur'an in which Almighty Allah has urged His servants to reflect upon Him, one will indeed be led to learn about Allah, about His Oneness and attributes of perfection; to learn about aspects of His might as attested by the absoluteness of His power, the infinite nature of His wisdom; by His mercy, generosity, clemency, kindness, justice, grace, anger, reward and punishment – it is through reflection on these facts that He willed His servants to know Him, and it is for this reason that He exhorted them to reflect upon His signs.

It is with this in mind that I here mention a number of signs as referred to in the Qur'an, so that they may be a reminder of further signs. One set of such signs are related to the creation of man. It will be noticed that in numerous places in the Qur'an we have been exhorted to reflect on the creation of man, as for example in the following verses:

﴿ فَلْيَنْظُرِ الْإِنْسَانُ مِمَّ خُلِقَ ﴾ [الطارق: ٥]

"Let man, then, observe from what he has been created." (86:5)

﴿ وَفِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَفَلَا تُبْصِرُونَ ﴾ [الذاريات: ٢١]

"Just as there are signs within your own selves: can you not, then, see?" (51: 21)

﴿ يَتَأَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِن كُنتُمْ فِي رَيْبٍ مِّنَ الْبَعْثِ فَإِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِّن تُّرَابٍ ثُمَّ مِّن نُّطْفَةٍ ثُمَّ مِّن عَلَقَةٍ ثُمَّ مِّن مُّضْغَةٍ مُّخَلَّقَةٍ وَغَيْرِ مُخَلَّقَةٍ لِّنُبَيِّنَ لَكُمْ وَنُقَرُّ فِي الْأَرْحَامِ مَا نَشَاءُ

إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ثُمَّ نُخْرِجُكُمْ طِفْلًا ثُمَّ لِتَبْلُغُوا أَشَدَّكُمْ وَمِنْكُمْ مَّن يُنَوِّقُ وَمِنْكُمْ مَّن يُرَدُّ إِلَىٰ أَرْذَلِ الْعُمُرِ لِكَيْلَا يَعْلَمَ مِن بَعْدِ عِلْمٍ شَيْئًا ﴾ [الحج: ٥]

"O men! If you are in doubt as to the truth of resurrection, remember that, verily, We have created every one of you out of dust, then out of a drop of sperm, then out of a germ-cell, then out of an embryonic lump complete in itself and yet incomplete, so that We might make your origin clear unto you.

"And whatever We will to be born We cause to rest in the mothers' wombs for a term set by Us, and then We bring you forth as infants and allow you to live so that some of you might attain to maturity: for among you are such as are caused to die in childhood, just as many a one of you is reduced in old age to a most abject state, ceasing to know anything of what he once knew so well." (21: 5)

﴿ أَيْحَسِبُ الْإِنْسَانُ أَن يُتْرَكَ سُدًى ۚ أَلَمْ يَكُنْ نُطْفَةً مِّن مَّنًى يُمْنً ۚ ثُمَّ كَانَ عَلَقَةً فَخَلَقَ فَسَوَّىٰ ۚ فَعَلَلَ مِنهُ الذَّكَرَ وَالْأُنثَىٰ ۚ أَلَيْسَ ذَلِكَ بِقَدِيرٍ عَلَىٰ أَن يُحْيِيَ الْمَوْتَىٰ ﴾ [القيامة: ٣٦-٤٠]

"Does man, then, think that he is to be left to himself, to go about at will?

Was he not once a mere drop of sperm that had been spilt, and thereafter became a germ-cell – whereupon He created and formed it in accordance with what it was meant to be, and fashioned out of it the two sexes, the male and the female?

Is not He, then, able to bring the dead back to life?" (75: 36-40).

﴿ أَلَمْ نَخْلُقْكُمْ مِّن مَّاءٍ مَّهِينٍ ۚ فَجَعَلْنَاهُ فِي قَرَارٍ مَّكِينٍ ۚ إِلَىٰ قَدَرٍ مَّعْلُومٍ ۚ فَقَدَرْنَا فَنِعْمَ الْقَدِيرُونَ ﴾ [المرسلات: ٢٠-٢٣]

"Did We not create you out of a humble fluid, which We then allowed to remain in the womb's firm keeping for a term pre-ordained?

Thus have We determined the nature of man's creation: and excellent indeed is Our power to determine what is to be!" (77: 20-23)

﴿أَوَلَمْ يَرِ الْإِنْسَنُ أَنَّا خَلَقْنَاهُ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ فَإِذَا هُوَ خَصِيمٌ مُبِينٌ﴾ [يس: ٧٧]

"Is man, then, not aware that it is We who create him out of a mere drop of sperm – whereupon, lo! he shows himself endowed with the power to think and to argue?" (36: 77)

﴿وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَنَ مِنْ سُلَالَةٍ مِّن طِينٍ ۝ ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَاهُ نُطْفَةً فِي قَرَارٍ مَّكِينٍ ۝ ثُمَّ خَلَقْنَا النُّطْفَةَ عَلَقَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْعَلَقَةَ مُضْغَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْمُضْغَةَ عِظْلًا فَكَسَوْنَا الْعِظْمَ لَحْمًا ثُمَّ أَنشَأْنَاهُ خَلْقًا آخَرَ فَتَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنُ الْخَالِقِينَ﴾

[المؤمنون: ١٢-١٤]

"Now, indeed, We create man out of the essence of clay, and then We cause him to remain as a drop of sperm in the womb's firm keeping, and then We create out of the drop of sperm a germ-cell, and then We create out of the germ-cell an embryonic lump, and then We create within the embryonic lump bones, and then We clothe the bones with flesh – and then We bring all this into being as a new creation: hallowed, therefore, is Allâh, the best of artisans!" (23: 12-14)

In many places in the Qur'an a human is urged to reflect and ponder over the starting of his creation, the growth and the end.

Male reproductive cells swimming in the Spermatic Fluid

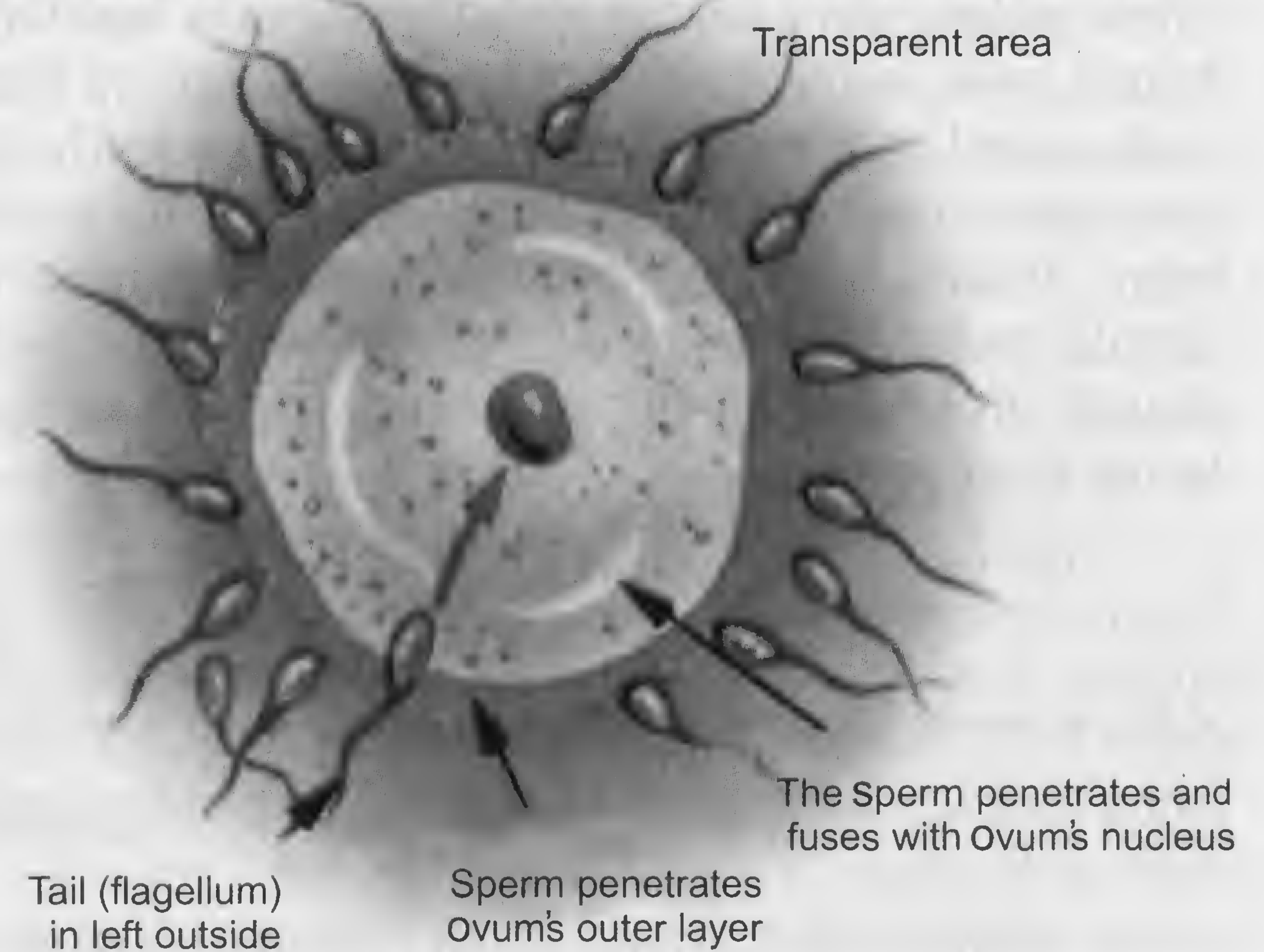


Figure "1"

1. The testes of the male are a kind of factory for sperm. There, sperm are produced on the inner surface of hollow tubes with a length of several kilometres. The cells mature there to be sperm, when each has a head 5 microns long and a tail 55 microns long. The sperm is considered to be a bearer of half a potential human. It may be noted that one ejaculation of semen from the male may carry 500 million sperm, or spermatozoa, although a human is created from just a single sperm. Even twins can be created from two sperm or spermatozoa that fertilize one egg. The sperm tubes in the testis are about 4000 in number (quoted from: "The Creation of Man, Between Medicine and the Qur'an")*

* The parts indented and in small script are modern material selected by Capt. Al-Qoz.